

Revisions to the Forest Legacy Program in Virginia July 22, 2008

During 2007 and early 2008, Virginia embarked on an extensive process to amend the Assessment of Need (AON) for the Forest Legacy Program in the Commonwealth. Approval of these changes was received on July 22, 2008. The revisions to the program are presented below.

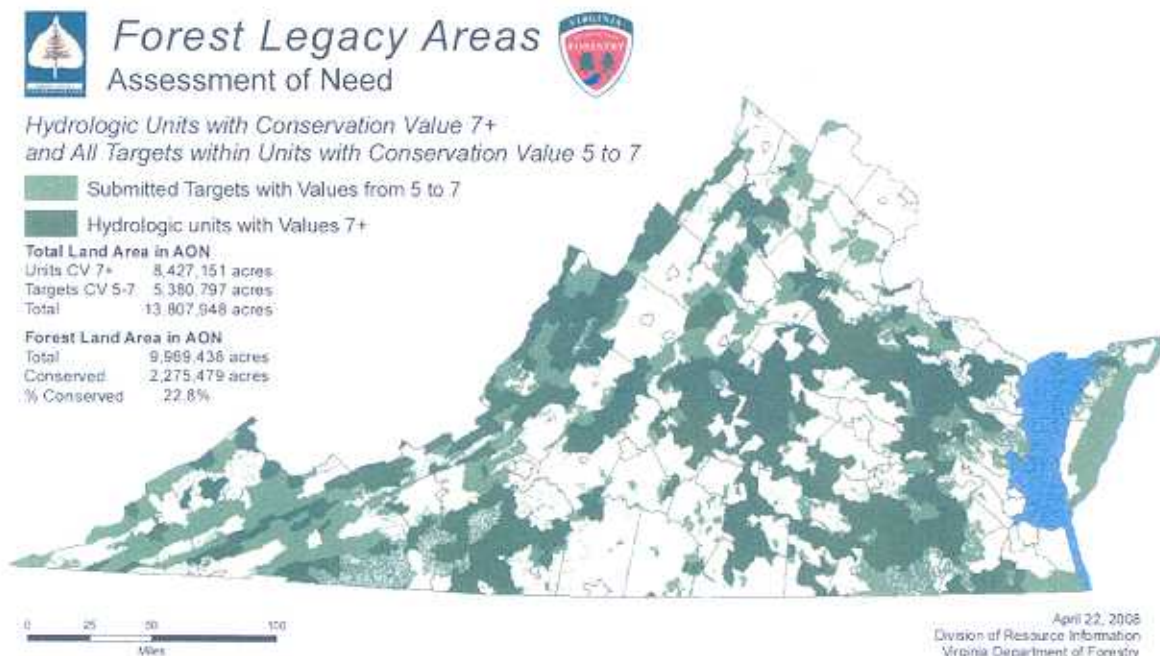
Eligibility Criteria

The revised Eligibility Criteria for the Virginia AON are:

- **Threatened by conversion** to non-forest use (fragmentation and reduction in linkages)
- Continued production of **timber and other forest commodities** (local and regional economic base)
- Consideration of **natural heritage resources** (e.g., natural communities, habitat for threatened and endangered species, significant geologic features)
- **Watershed values** (water quality, wetlands, riparian buffers, groundwater recharge, public water supplies)

Forest Legacy Areas

The revised Forest Legacy Areas (FLA) for Virginia are shown below; GIS shape files are available:



Procedures Modifications

Pre-Applications and Application Acceptance

Legacy applications will require a process for pre-applications to allow for determination of whether any particular project is in the FLA.

Legacy applications will be accepted that fall, wholly or partially, within the boundaries of the new FLA. When necessary, minor FLA boundary adjustments will be submitted for approval by the USFS Region for projects that fall only partially within the FLA.

Note: The AON procedure revisions found above were made necessary by the reduction in the FLA to an area less than the entire geographic area of the state.

Interim FLA Revisions

In each succeeding calendar year, until the AON is again scheduled for a comprehensive review in 2013, DOF plans to involve the Forest Legacy Sub-Committee (FLSC) and the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC) in a process of examining the FLA to determine if it remains current and meets the present-day needs of the program and the land conservation community in the state. These reviews will be undertaken in the fall of each calendar year (during the FLSC September meeting) to prepare for the Legacy RFP distribution the following winter.

This annual review of the FLA may involve additional GIS analysis and additional requests for submission of target areas. This process will allow the FLSC to keep the program in stride with current statewide needs and current mapping and analysis technology.

This process will allow for:

- Submission of valid target areas by groups that may have missed the submission deadlines during this current revisions process
- Changes to the target areas of conservation stakeholders during subsequent years
- Continual updating of the program to meet current needs.

Minor revisions to the FLA, if found to be necessary during this annual review, will be submitted to the U. S. Forest Service (USFS) Regional office for approval. Major revisions, if they occur, will also be provided to both the USFS Regional office and the USFS Washington office for approval. If approved, the data will be amended in the Forest Legacy Information System (FLIS), and updated shape files will be submitted as required.